
ASTYM-ulating Technique

The ASTYM system is a form of augmented soft tissue mobilization that allows a clinician to stimulate the body's ability to heal itself in patients with degenerative, fibrotic, or chronically inflamed soft tissue structures. This technique uses ergonomically designed instruments to initiate a healing process that is necessary for the tissue remodeling and regeneration.

ASTYM is effective with treating adhesions and abnormal fibrotic tissue surrounding or in a soft tissue structure that results from surgery, trauma, immobilization, or strains/sprains. With issues like degenerative tendons that do not produce healthy cells/collagen, there is poor blood flow and a tendency to be weak and injury prone.

Using the instruments that help detect abnormal tissue, soft tissue adhesions are identified and then broken down. This technique causes a controlled microtrauma that stimulates an inflammatory response which allows the body to "re-heal" the area and absorb the inappropriate fibrotic tissue or abnormal scar tissue. The collagen is remodeled and normal collagen build-up is encouraged by a specific functional strengthening and stretching program.

With the ASTYM system, patients are seen twice a week with visits two days apart. In addition, patients are responsible for maintaining a flexibility program at home that was provided by the therapist. After the treatment, patients may feel some soreness and may experience some bruising for 24 to 48 hours. Patients usually experience a decrease in some of their symptoms along with increased mobility and functional ability after 3 to 4 treatment sessions.

There are many diagnoses that respond well to ASTYM. Although ASTYM is an effective treatment for chronic tendonitis and tendinosis injuries, acute injuries also respond well to ASTYM. Patients who have pain or range of motion/mobility deficits following an injury, surgery or repetitive injuries that include chronic tendonitis would benefit from ASTYM. Patients who suffer from plantar fasciitis, patellar tendonitis, achilles tendonitis, iliotibial band syndrome, lateral/medial epicondylitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, De Quervain's tenosynovitis, trigger finger, trochanteric bursitis, anterior knee pain, chronic ankle sprains, chronic strains of muscles, and shin splints.

Why is ASTYM a great therapeutic treatment option? ASTYM is supported by scientific research and clinical outcomes. It has been effective when other treatment options have not been

successful, has high patient compliance, and patients are able to stay active throughout the duration of treatment (e.g., runners keep running, workers keep working). ASTYM can decrease the need for surgical intervention, and provides maximal results with a minimal number of treatment sessions to re-establish function and decrease symptoms.

“I have been certified for 3 years with the ASTYM system and it has changed the way I treat as a physical therapist,” said Abby Smith. “I feel that I no longer ‘mask’ their symptoms, but rather correct them so they will have fewer re-current episodes. I incorporate all traditional therapy techniques including mobilizations, stretching and strengthening to get maximal results! My patients love it because they feel some relief after one session and they are able to stay in their activity or work.”

Abby Smith, PT

Abby Smith, PT is a physical therapist and facility manager of Oakbrook Terrace and Downers Grove. She has been employed with Accelerated for over five years. As a treating physical therapist she specializes in the ASTYM technique and working with endurance athletes.